

What is claimed is:

1. An information providing apparatus comprising:

a first authentication means for authenticating a first information processing unit;

a second authentication means for authenticating a second information processing unit or a third information processing unit;

a reception control means for controlling the reception of a request to send contents and a key and data for identifying said second information processing unit or data for identifying said third information processing unit, said request and said data being supplied from said first information processing unit;

a communication control means for controlling, if said data for identifying said second information processing unit are received, the transmission of said request to send said contents and said key to said second information processing unit in a procedure corresponding to said second information processing unit, and, if said contents and said key are received and said data for identifying said third information processing unit are received from said second information processing unit, the transmission of said request to send said contents and said key to said third information processing unit

and the reception of said contents and said key from said third information processing unit in a procedure corresponding to said third information processing unit; and

a transmission control means for controlling the transmission of said contents and said key to said first information processing unit.

2. The information providing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

a conversion means for converting at least one of a encoding scheme and an encryption scheme in which said contents is encoded and encrypted into one of a predetermined encoding scheme and a predetermined encryption scheme.

3. The information providing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said first information processing unit is a portable electronic device for reproducing said contents and said second information processing unit and said third information processing unit are servers each including a contents server and a key server and each having a different procedure in which contents and its key are supplied.

4. The information providing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a server licensed compliant

module which is constituted as a proxy server.

5. An information providing method comprising the steps of:

authenticating a first information processing unit;

authenticating a second information processing unit
or a third information processing unit;

controlling the reception of a request to send
contents and a key and data for identifying said second
information processing unit or data for identifying said
third information processing unit, said request and said
data being supplied from said first information
processing unit;

controlling, if said data for identifying said
second information processing unit are received, the
transmission of said request to send said contents and
said key to said second information processing unit in a
procedure corresponding to said second information
processing unit, and, if said contents and said key are
received and said data for identifying said third
information processing unit are received from said second
information processing unit, the transmission of said
request to send said contents and said key to said third
information processing unit and the reception of said
contents and said key from said third information

processing unit in a procedure corresponding to said third information processing unit; and

controlling the transmission of said contents and said key to said first information processing unit.

6. The information providing method according to claim 5, further comprising the step of:

converting at least one of a encoding scheme and an encryption scheme in which said contents is encoded and encrypted into one of a predetermined encoding scheme and a predetermined encryption scheme.

7. The information providing method according to claim 5, wherein said first information processing unit is a portable electronic device for reproducing said contents and said second information processing unit and said third information processing unit are servers each including a contents server and a key server and each having a different procedure in which contents and its key are supplied.

8. The information providing method according to claim 5, wherein said method is executed by a proxy server including a server licensed compliant module.

9. A program storage medium storing a computer-readable program comprising the steps of:

authenticating a first information processing unit;

authenticating a second information processing unit or a third information processing unit;

controlling the reception of a request to send contents and a key and data for identifying said second information processing unit or data for identifying said third information processing unit, said request and said data being supplied from said first information processing unit;

controlling, if said data for identifying said second information processing unit are received, the transmission of said request to send said contents and said key to said second information processing unit in a procedure corresponding to said second information processing unit, and, if said contents and said key are received and said data for identifying said third information processing unit are received from said second information processing unit, the transmission of said request to send said contents and said key to said third information processing unit and the reception of said contents and said key from said third information processing unit in a procedure corresponding to said third information processing unit; and

controlling the transmission of said contents and said key to said first information processing unit.

10. An information processing apparatus comprising:

an authentication means for authenticating a first information providing unit;

a transmission control means for controlling the transmission of any one of a request to send contents and a key to said first information providing unit, data for identifying a second information providing unit for providing said contents and said key, and data for identifying a third information providing unit for providing said contents and said key; and

a reception control means for controlling the reception of said contents and said key supplied from said second information providing unit or said third information providing unit to said first information providing unit.

11. The information processing apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said first information providing unit is a proxy server having a server licensed compliant module and said second information providing unit and said third information providing unit are servers each including a contents server and a key server and each having a different procedure in which contents and its key are supplied.

12. The information processing apparatus according to

claim 10, wherein said information processing apparatus is a portable electronic device for reproducing said contents.

13. The information processing apparatus according to claim 10, having a download program capable of downloading contents from any of said second information providing unit and said third information providing unit.

14. An information processing method comprising the steps of:

authenticating a first information providing unit;
controlling the transmission of any one of a request to send contents and a key to said first information providing unit, data for identifying a second information providing unit for providing said contents and said key, and data for identifying a third information providing unit for providing said contents and said key; and

controlling the reception of said contents and said key supplied from said second information providing unit or said third information providing unit to said first information providing unit.

15. The information processing method according to claim 14, wherein said first information providing unit is a proxy server having a server licensed compliant

module and said second information providing unit and said third information providing unit are servers each having a contents server and a key server and each having a different procedure in which contents and its key are supplied.

16. The information processing method according to claim 14, wherein said method is executed by a portable electronic device for reproducing said contents.

17. The information processing method according to claim 14, wherein each of said reception controlling steps is executed by a download program capable of downloading contents from any of said second information providing unit and said third information providing unit.

18. A program storage medium storing a computer-readable program comprising:

authenticating a first information providing unit;
controlling the transmission of any one of a request to send contents and a key to said first information providing unit, data for identifying a second information providing unit for providing said contents and said key, and data for identifying a third information providing unit for providing said contents and said key; and

controlling the reception of said contents and said

key supplied from said second information providing unit
or said third information providing unit to said first
information providing unit.